

23 Nov 2002

From: LCDR Pat Paterson, USN, 181-48-6629/1110
To: Chief of Naval Personnel (PERS-2)
Via: (1) Commander, U.S. Military Group Argentina
(2) Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command

Subj: PEP TOUR REPORT (OPNAV 5700-5)

Ref: OPNAVINST 5700.7G

1. Name of 2002 billet holder: LCDR Pat Paterson, USN, 181-48-6629
2. Unit Assigned to: Argentine Naval War College
3. Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Official Mailing Address of billet holder:

USMILGRP Argentina
Unit 4329
APO AA 34034-4329

4. Rank required for billet: LCDR (O-4) or CDR (O-5) preferably with an unrestricted line officer designator. The majority of Argentine Naval officers were O-4s although there were three O-5s also in attendance.

5. Billet title: Student, Argentine Naval War College

6. a. Billet description: Foreign War College Exchange Student
- b. Billet Sequence Code: 99990
- c. Navy Officer Billet Classification: Not assigned.
- d. Security Clearance Required: Minimum CONFIDENTIAL but SECRET is recommended.
- e. Duties and Responsibilities: Attends and participates in a graduate level course of Naval Warfare instruction which includes Global and Operational Strategy, International Law, the Law of Armed Conflict, International Relations, Global and Operational Strategy, Administration, Human Resources, Military and Applied Logistics. The material is split between lectures and group studies. Each week also saw guest lecturers provide presentations on issues of interest such as global and national politics, economics, terrorism, and international relations. There are a series of gaming exercises toward the end of the course with other naval officers and also with Argentine Air Force and Army Officers. These games are designed to apply many of the concepts and material covered during the course of the year.

Foreign exchange students (my class had seven) are required to deliver three 20-minute presentations to the class. The topics included a brief on the student's home navy, the student's country, and a third presentation of the student's choice.

The foreign students were also offered two field trips toward the end of the course. The trips visited local military bases in the area and also the naval facilities of Puerto Belgrano near Bahia Blanca.

Each student is also required to complete a thesis of 40-70 pages. The topic is chosen by the student but should have some relevance to the course material. The thesis is due in September and, at the end of the course (early November), the student is required to give a 20 minute defense of the thesis material to a board of 4-6 professors headed by the school director.

7. Types of aircraft/ships

This is not an operational billet. The Argentines do provide opportunities to visit various in port operational naval units through a series of organized tours at the end of the course. No at sea or flying time was offered or solicited.

8. Type of training

The entire curriculum with the exception of a two-day course on International Law of the Sea (given by guest professors from the Naval War College in Newport in English) is taught in Spanish. Therefore, unless the incoming billet holder already possesses minimum language proficiency, successful completion of the Basic Spanish Language Course from the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA is mandatory prior to arrival in Buenos Aires.

The language proficiency is absolutely essential to the US student's performance during the academic year. From my experience (completion of the Advanced Language Course), those students with only basic language experience are not adequately prepared to immediately contribute during in class discussions at the commencement of the school year. On the average, it takes these student 2-4 months to acquire the language skills necessary to participate knowledgably in class discussions. Consideration should be given to providing additional language training at DLI or in country prior to commencing classes.

9. Qualifications

The billet holder must possess a minimum of 2/2 on the listening and reading comprehension portions of the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). It is important to note that this is an absolute minimum required for any degree of participation in what is a graduate level course with the accompanying course workload.

10. Security clearance

A security clearance is not required to attend the school; no classified material is handled during the course. The student should have a secret clearance in order to conduct business in the Embassy.

11. The Staff and Command Course

a. The Course. The course is 10 weeks in length. It starts the first week of February and ends the second week of December. There is a two week winter break in July. The course consists of a Naval Command Course, a Marine Command Course, and a Logistics/Administrative Course. Much of the course material is delivered in

lecture format or in group projects. In the 2002 class, there were a total of 43 officers including seven foreign exchange officers (Bolivia, Canada, Chile, United States, Mexico, and two from Peru). The Argentine officers are all line officers (Marines, surface, submarines, and aviators). There were no women in the class.

b. General Layout. The Naval War College is located at 8100 Avenida Libertador near the Rio Plata in the northern suburbs of the Federal Capital. The war college is one of several Navy schools on the grounds. The building and classrooms are in fair condition but financial restrictions because of the severe economic-crisis have started a process of deterioration. The rooms are equipped with basic audiovisual equipment and computers including internet access. There is substantial athletic fields on the grounds.

c. Faculty. The faculty is headed by a group of officers, some active duty, other retired. Many retired admirals also make up part of the faculty. The school staff consists of mostly active duty officers led by the school director, a Navy captain. The majority of instructors were qualified with advanced degrees or by their experience in the military.

d. Thesis. A thesis is required by each student. Target size is about 40 pages although many students wrote upwards of 80-100 pages. Research material comes mostly from internet sources, local interviews, or the war college library. The thesis is written in Spanish. The students receive classes on methodology and also receive an instructor advisor of their choice.

e. Daily Routine. Class starts daily at 0830 and runs through to 1700 Monday to Thursday. On Fridays, the class ends at 1230 so that many geographical bachelors can return to their homes in Bahia Blanca. On Wednesday mornings, the students do group physical training from 0830 to 1030. Lunch breaks last from 1315 to 1415.

f. Uniforms. The daily uniform for the U.S. student is summer khakis. On occasion, there is a requirement to wear the formal uniform like service dress blues or summer whites.

g. School Sponsored Travel. The school sponsors numerous trips for the foreign exchange students toward the end of the year. The first is to the naval bases in and around Puerto Belgrano. The second is a variety of trips to local military bases in and around Buenos Aires. In past years, there were trips to other countries to visit their war colleges but recent financial restrictions have prevented that.

12. Living Conditions and Cultural Highlights

a. Buenos Aires is the capital of Argentina and is home to almost a third of the population. The city has an excellent infrastructure with buses, subways, trains, and airline transportation. Sports are extremely popular and the national teams of soccer, tennis, rugby, and polo are considered among the best in the world. The city was settled by immigrants from many other nations including Italy, Spain, England, and Germany. As such, there is a wide diversity of cultural sites in the city.

There is adequate time for personal travel during the year and Argentina offers a myriad of geographical highlights: mountains, coastline, jungle, and the famous Patagonia. Neighboring countries of Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil also offer great attractions.

The city has its share of problems with crime but it's not unlike any major city in the U.S. The economic crisis has increased petty crime in many parts of the city but the

government has responded with an increased police presence that is readily visible in many parts.

13. Considerations for Future PEP Students.

a. Arrival dates. The school starts in February but students should arrive as soon as possible. Apartment hunting, embassy check in procedures, and just getting comfortable living in a foreign country take some time.

b. Chain of Command. COMUSNAVSO in Puerto Rico has administrative responsibility for all PEP students in South America. The local Military Group commander assists administratively with these duties.

c. Medical care. Medical services are provided through the U.S. Embassy. Hospital services in Buenos Aires are excellent and readily available.

d. Accommodations. Temporary accommodations are available in local hotels upon arrival in country. Most students spend at least a month in a hotel until they are able to find a house or apartment and move into it. Property and car shipments take approximately two months to arrive in country. Once accommodations are found, the Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) and other living expenses are adequate to allow the PEP student to live very comfortably during the duration of his stay.

e. Transportation. Moving about Buenos Aires and Argentina is very simple. There is a very adequate transportation system in and around the capital consisting of trains, subways, taxis, buses, ferries, and airplanes. Buenos Aires is home to an international airport and a domestic airport. Students are authorized to ship one vehicle to and from Argentina. Drivers licenses can be acquired from the local DMV with assistance from the MILGRP representatives.

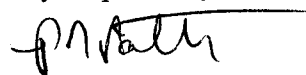
f. Schools. Most embassy personnel send their children to the American School in the suburbs, the Lincoln School. It has all grades under one roof, caters to many rich Argentine families, and has a good reputation. Bus transportation is available from downtown Buenos Aires.

14. Summary.

a. The Argentine Naval War College is designed to prepare mid-grade officers for a position on a major staff. The course is required for all Argentine officers. Whereas the school quality is average among other national war colleges, the experiences shared with foreign naval officers and exposures to different philosophies is invaluable.

b. The language training is my single biggest recommendation. Most U.S. students show up with a very basic understanding of the complexities of the language. This does not allow them to contribute during complex class discussions, especially considering the uniqueness of Argentine Spanish, which has a entire lexicon of slang and tricky pronunciations. The end result is an inability to contribute to class discussions for approximately a quarter or third of the class, depending on each student's abilities.

Very respectfully,



Pat Paterson
LCDR USN